



# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## NEW MISSION BELL MARKS THE WAY IN DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES

**LOS ANGELES**—The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) celebrated 100 years of the El Camino Real Mission Bell Marker System and installation of a new mission bell in Downtown Los Angeles today.

The new bell was installed in Father Serra Park, on the east side of Los Angeles Street across from El Pueblo de Los Angeles Plaza Church, where the first mission bell was established in 1906.

By 1913, more than 450 of the picturesque bells marked locations on El Camino Real (much of which is now U.S. 101). Damage, vandalism, and theft caused that number to dwindle to less than 100 by 1996, when Caltrans began its efforts to restore the markers. This project gained momentum in 2000, when the Department was given a Federal Transportation Enhancement Activities (TEA) grant for \$1.4 million to complete the restoration. Since then, 550 new bells have been installed, manufactured from the original bell mold.

In addition to Caltrans, the ceremony included several other representatives of the mission bells project, including two of the women's clubs that spearheaded the original bell installation, a well-known mission bells historian, and the current bells manufacturer.

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